



Friends of Canadian Corridor.

Celebrating ten years of the “Multi-Use Forest Park”



The Launch: Ten years ago, on September 20th 2014, the Friends of Canadian Corridor launched an audacious request to establish a “Multi-Use Forest Park” in the then Canadian Forest on Ballarat’s East side.

A large crowd gathered near Olympic Av Mt Clear, to hear Wadawurrung elder, Uncle Bryon Powell welcome everybody to country and to launch the request for the Canadian Forest and plantation to become a “Multi Use Forest Park”.



Uncle Bryan Powell and FoCC co-convenor Linda Zibell addressing the launch

Then the FoCC leaders made their pitch to all forthcoming state election local candidates asking:

“Will you commit in writing, your support for the establishment of a Canadian Multi Use Forest Park?”

Will you commit in writing, that your leader and party will provide funding for the establishment of a Canadian Multi Use Forest Park?”

This request was made in the knowledge of the forthcoming November 2014 State election.

The call was heeded by the then opposition leader Daniel Andrews, pledging \$2m to establish the Park and was enacted by him upon becoming Premier.

The legislation: “CROWN LAND LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (CANADIAN REGIONAL PARK AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2015

The delivery of the pledge began with the passing of the establishment bill through the Victorian Parliament in 2015. The Park was gazetted on the August 5th 2016 and opened the same day by the Premier Andrews at Earth Ed Science Centre, Mt Clear.

Renamed Woowookarung: In 2017 following consultation with local indigenous leaders and the community, the Park was renamed Woowookarung Regional Park. Woowookarung is a Wadawurrung word meaning “a place of plenty”

The name change was celebrated by Minister D’Ambrosio with Wadawurrung elders Uncle Bryon Powell and Aunty Violet at Mt Clear on July 19th 2017

The Strategic Directions Plan: In 2018, Parks Victoria developed a Strategic Directions Plan for the Park after significant consultation, involving numerous local community groups, forums and submissions.

The Plan identified a broad range of opportunities and community aspirations for the Park’s development over the 20-year timeline.



Uncle Bryon Powell, Aunty Violet and Minister Lily D’Ambrosio MP at the renaming ceremony.

Since 2018, significant works and activities have been undertaken within the Park.

- Grasstree Nature Trail construction
- Cherry Ballart and Fern trails constructed
- Pine and weed removal
- Closing of 4WD drive tracks
- Rubbish removal and control
- A Koala sighting citizen science program identifying where Koalas are present in the Park and surrounds. Now nearing 400 confirmed sightings all recorded on iNaturalist.
- The establishment of the award-winning Dementia Friendly Forest and Sensory trail in the centre of the Park.
- Revegetation of closed tracks and bare areas. Almost 10000 trees planted by FoCC and Parks Victoria together since 2017.
- Identifying and quarantining of areas where Grasstrees have been identified as infected by Phytophthora fungus.
- Agencies such as Central Highlands Water are now providing a much higher standard of land management practices on their infrastructure within the Park.

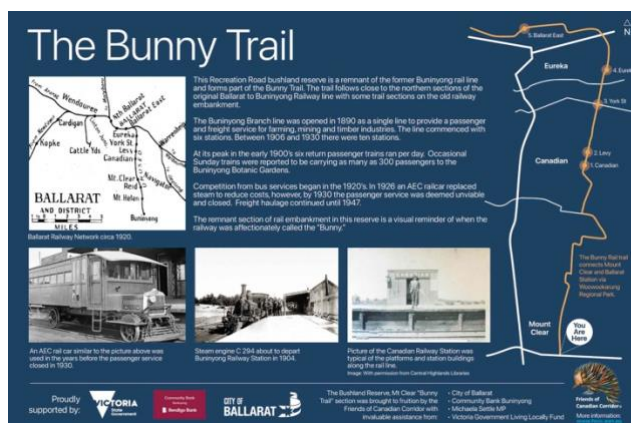


Ballarat Courier 28th January 2022

The Bunny Trail: The completion of the Bunny Trail from Recreation Road to the Park is now complete.

The next stage is to install signage from Ballarat Station to the Recreation Road Bushland Reserve in Mt Clear.

Recreation Rd: A planned upgrade of Recreation Rd by the City of Ballarat should see a safer road for wildlife, walkers, riders and motor traffic. The upgrade should have traffic calming measures, innovative wildlife crossing infrastructure, walking and cycling trails within the overall road designed to bring the Northern and Southern sections of Woookarung Regional Park together.



The Bunny Trail sign

The future: Ten years on, the Park is now well established with more restoration and development works planned. A visitor node with an information kiosk, toilets, car parking and picnic furniture is now in the planning phase, to be located somewhere close to the Dementia Trail

In the longer term, building the walk/cycle bridge over the Gorge on Mt Helen Creek would complete the Bunny Trail between Mt Clear and Buninyong

The bridge would link Olympic Avenue with Greenhill Rd and assist in creating a seamless trail from Ballarat to Buninyong.

The trail may form part of the Regional Goldfields Track between Bendigo, Ballarat and Buninyong.



The proposed bridge as proposed in the Strategic Directions Plan.

FoCC 18th September 2024.